

On the Beat

Minneapolis VA

Health Care System

July/August 2013



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Twins Coach, Players a Hit with VA Patients

Win or lose, the fans love their Minnesota Twins. For nearly two hours on June 13, Twins manager Ron Gardenier and three players showed that the Twins care for Veterans. It was the third year in a row that "Gardy" and players visited the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. They spent time with patients on the Community Living Center and Spinal Cord Injury/Disorder Center. Coach and players also gowned in order to visit two patients in isolation. "Gardy" told the group in the CLC that he grew up in a military family. "I always thought I would wear a uniform," he said. "I didn't know it would be a baseball uniform." Accompanying "Gardy" this year were pitchers Mike Pelfrey (pictured lower right), Brian Duensing and Scott Diamond. Twins Mascot, TC Bear, helped out as a temporary greeter at the Visitor's Entrance.



VA Research on the Treatment of Depression

Minneapolis VA is one of 35 sites participating in the VA Cooperative Studies Program investigating treatment options for major depression. The study is open to patients with depression who are minimally or partially responding to antidepressant treatment.

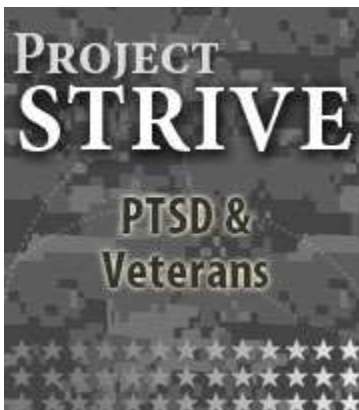
Eligible patients will be randomized into multiple treatment arms, utilizing three different medication approaches. Participants will be seen every 1-4 weeks for up to 9 months. After the patient has completed or exited the study, he/she will return to the referring physician for their care or be transitioned to the appropriate level of care. Participants also receive a stipend for each clinic visit after randomization, which helps to offset travel cost.

Contact: Study Coordinator Julie Tomaska, PhD (612) 467-5560 Julie.Tomaska@va.gov Site investigator: Gihyun Yoon, MD (612-467-3996), Joseph Westermeyer, MD, PhD (612) 467-3961. Information is available online at www.Clinicaltrials.gov: NCT01421342, search on: "VAST-D"



VAMC Hosts Launch of BVA Bridge Builder Project

On Aug. 2, the Black Veterans of America announced plans to hold 9 "dialogue" sessions in Minneapolis and St. Paul in an effort to collect input from black Veterans. At left, BVA chairman Rev. Richard Jenkins addresses press conference held in the VA Medical Center's 2nd floor flag atrium.



Project STRIVE (Substance Use and Trauma Intervention for Veterans) is a research study being conducted at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center that is approved and funded by the VA. This study is specifically for Veterans who are distressed by a past traumatic event (for example, thinking a lot about distressing combat experiences, having nightmares about an assault) and who currently are drinking and/or using illicit drugs. Program involves: 16 weekly therapy visits to work on PTSD and substance use issues; 7 research assessment visits; the total participation commitment is 10 months (including the 6 month follow-up). For more information about Project STRIVE or to enroll, contact Molly Charlesworth at (612) 467-1765.



Ely Outreach Clinic Draws Crowd

Despite cool summer temperatures and competition from the annual Blueberry Festival, more than 60 people turned out for the dedication of the newest clinic in the Minneapolis VA Health Care System in Ely, MN. City officials, veterans, staff and a reporter from the Ely Echo celebrated the opening of the clinic, located on Miners Drive, only a few blocks from downtown Ely. The 3200 square foot clinic, operated by Sterling Medical, is open Tuesdays and Thursdays. According to a service-connected Vietnam veteran who lives in Tower, MN, "With a clinic so close now, I'll do a better job of taking care of my health."



Twin Ports Outpatient Clinic Re-Dedication



“What do we call this event?” That’s the rhetorical question asked by Dr. Clyde Markon (lower left) at the July 12 celebration to mark completion of the \$2.5 million renovation of the Twin Ports Outpatient Clinic space occupied by VA since 1988 in Essentia Medical/St. Mary’s Hospital in Superior, WI. Markon, medical director of the Minneapolis VA community based outpatient clinics, continued: “Is it a rededication or a reopening? I prefer to call today a renewal of purpose.” Also speaking to the crowd of 164 people were Rep. Rick Nolan (center) and Terry Jacobson, VP of Essentia, (lower right).

Hibbing CBOC Moves to New Space



The Hibbing Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) has moved – but only about 100 feet from its previous location in the Iron Gate Mall. It is now under new management – Sterling Medical, based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Sterling operates 19 VA clinics around the country, including the Mankato and St. James CBOCs. About 40 people attended the new clinic open house on July 26. U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan (D-8th district) was the keynote speaker along with Minneapolis VA Health Care System Director Pat Kelly and Clyde Markon, MD, medical director of the Minneapolis VA's network of CBOCs and outreach clinics.

Career Milestones – Congratulations!

45 Years King Wai mA Primary Care 40 years Sherrie Williams Business David Gangelhoff Engineering Douglas Johnson Fiscal Service Sandra Lundgren Mental health 35 Years Thomas Wohlers Engineering Claudine Fasching Lab Medicine Barbara Iverson ECR Jeanne Rock Biomedical Fred Peterson Primary Care Barbara Kuzenski Specialty Care Benita Welch Pharmacy 30 Years Lois Janson Twin Ports	Paul Chamberlain Mental Health Connie Clabots Primary Care Jana Salinger Specialty Care David Ahrens Health & Safety Darr Sigler CI Scott Mandler Biomedical Marilyn Durand Specialty Care Mark Skugrud IT Kenny Hawkins NFS Barbara Dingman Primary Care Terry Christensen Primary Care 25 Years Gerald Duncanson Business Office Rita Schoenike HR Kelly Humpal Specialty Care	Mary Reyes Lab Medicine Katharina Ryan Voluntary Services Teresa Patrick ECR Michael Dixon Specialty Care Julie Wiessenberger Mental Health 20 Years Rose Johnson HR Kathleen Knutson Specialty Care John Dees Specialty Care Corina Clifton Primary Care Janet Wittman Pharmacy Dinah Caswell Pharmacy Paul Gillis CI 15 Years Richard Otken Health & Safety	Cleo Bonham Education Hildi Hagedorn Mental Health David Nelson Research Terri Egesdal Specialty Care Linda Kollman Research Susan Spindler Mental Health Colleen Fitzpatrick ECR Kathleen Stiles ECR Denise Rogich Pharmacy Bridget Wennerstrom Specialty Care Neil Henriksen Primary Care Kellie Lattin Education Benjamin Emons Fiscal 10 Years Phillip Rogers Engineering Michael Vance Health & Safety	Anne Westgard Primary Care Wendy Carle Pharmacy Kyle Freeman Primary Care Jonathan Erickson Education Ashad Ashan Primary Care Ali Elmi Primary Care Maria Hogan Primary Care Cory Lane Imaging Demarc Riley ECR Christie Spevacek ECR Jodi Willie ECR Theresa Stone ECR Mark Herzberg Specialty Care Janelle Mitchell Specialty Care Jerome Higgins Acquisition Mgmt Douglas Scott Engineering	Donald Walker Health/Safety Michele Johnson Police Kimberly West Patient Care Bruce Meyer ECR Kyle Curry Mental Health Rebecca Whittenburg Imaging Daniel Clarin Specialty Care John Ybarra NFS Jeffrey Guenther Imaging Rita Crosby Primary Care Kathleen Veek Primary Care Paula Haugdahl Specialty Care Patricia Mclinn Specialty Care Anna Tosca Pharmacy Venkat Tholakanahalli Primary Care
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Minneapolis VA Welcomes New Director Pat Kelly



Veterans, service organization leaders, staff and congressional aides attended the reception for Pat Kelly on July 19. Top photo: Group welcomes new director; Center photo (l) Kelly and VISN23 Director Janet Murphy; (r) Kelly and Primary Care PSL Chief Kristin Nichol and Deputy Chief Peter Duane; Lower left, Kelly and Reggie Worlds of Minnesota Dept of Veterans Affairs; and Kelly and Diane Peterson, of OEF/OIF program.



What You Should Know About VA Health Care & the Affordable Care Act

What is the Affordable Care Act? The Affordable Care Act, also known as the health care law, was created to expand access to affordable health care coverage to all Americans, lower costs, and improve quality and care coordination. Under the health care law, people will have:

- health coverage that meets a minimum standard (called “minimum essential coverage”);
- qualify for an exemption; or
- make a payment when filing their taxes if they have affordable options but remain uninsured.

In 2014, Health Insurance Marketplaces will be a new way to find health coverage. On the Marketplaces, some people may be eligible for lower costs on premiums and out-of-pocket costs based on their income.

AT A GLANCE

- VA wants all Veterans to get health care that improves their health and well-being.
- If you are enrolled in VA health care, you don’t need to take additional steps to meet the health care law coverage standards.
- The health care law does not change VA health benefits or Veterans’ out-of-pocket costs.
- If you are not enrolled in VA health care, you can apply at any time.

If I’m enrolled in a VA health care program, do I meet the requirement for health care coverage?

Yes. If you are enrolled in any of VA’s programs below, you have coverage under the standards of the health care law:

- Veteran’s health care program
- Civilian Health and Medical program (CHAMPVA)
- Spina bifida health care program

What are the benefits of VA health care programs?

- Medical care rated among the best in the U.S.
- Immediate benefits of health care coverage. Veterans may apply for VA health care enrollment at any time.
- No enrollment fee, monthly premiums, or deductibles. Most Veterans have no out-of-pocket costs. Some Veterans may have to pay small copayments for health care or prescription drugs.
- More than 1,700 places available to get your care. This means your coverage can go with you if you travel or move.
- Freedom to use other plans with your VA health care, including Medicare, Medicaid, TRICARE, or private insurance.
- You have met the new requirement to have health care coverage.

If I’m not enrolled in a VA health care program, how can I apply? You can apply for VA health care at any time by visiting www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll, calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387), or visiting your local VA health care facility.

Where can I get more information? Visit VA’s website at www.va.gov/aca, or call 1-877-222-VETS (8387), Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. or Saturdays 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., eastern. For more information about the Marketplace, visit www.healthcare.gov.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Aug. 27 – Military Appreciation Day at Minnesota State Fair. Military and veterans receive discounted admission. Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans parade. 50 Information booths at Carousel Park. Flyover at 10:45 a.m.

Sept. 3 – Homeless Summit at Minneapolis VA (9-11:30 a.m. in auditorium)

Sept. 3 – Mental Health Summit at Minneapolis VA (1-4:30 pm in auditorium).

Sept. 13 – “Thinking About Suicide Prevention Outside of the Box” 8:30 a.m. in auditorium.

Sept. 18 – Diversity Day, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., at Minneapolis VAMC (west side of facility).

5K Family “Fun Run, Walk & Roll”

Saturday, September 14, 2013

9 a.m. – ½ mile Fun Run (for kids)

9:30 a.m. – 5K Wheelers

10:00 am. – 5K Runners and Walkers

Participants: VA staff, veterans, family members and general public

Course: The 5-kilometer course starts and ends at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center.

Cost: \$15 per entry (includes t-shirt). \$5 for veterans enrolled in MOVE Program (includes t-shirt). Fun-run is free

Registration: Public Affairs Office, Minneapolis VAMC, One Veterans Drive, Minneapolis MN 55417. Participants must register before August 30 to receive t-shirt.

Minneapolis VAMC 5K Family “Fun Run/Walk & Roll” - ENTRY FORM

Name _____

– Mailing

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

–

Adult Shirt Size

- ☐ Small
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ Large
- ☐ X Large
- ☐ XX Large
- ☐ XXX Large

I certify that I am in good physical condition and am able to safely compete in this event, that I personally assume all risks incident to my participation in the above race and that, in consideration of you accepting my entry, I, my personal representative and heirs, hereby release the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and all persons involved in the race from any and all claims, demands, actions or causes of actions incident to my participation in this race.

Signature _____ Date _____

(Required of Parent/Guardian if participant is under 18 years of age)

Make check payable to Veterans 5K and send to:

Public Affairs Office, c/o Minneapolis VAMC,

One Veterans Drive, Minneapolis MN 55417 by August 30. You can also drop them off at 3B-140.



Minneapolis VA - “Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality”

Recognition was made in the Healthcare Equality Index 2013, an annual survey conducted by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation, the educational arm of the country’s largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) organization. The Minneapolis VAHCS earned top marks for its commitment to equitable, inclusive care for LGBT patients and their families, who can face significant challenges in securing adequate healthcare. The Minneapolis VAHCS was one of 464 healthcare facilities nationwide to be named Leaders in LGBT Healthcare Equality. .

VA QuitLine Offers Veterans Individualized

Counseling and Follow-up

VA’s newest resource is a telephone quitline just for Veterans. Veterans who receive health care through VA can call 1–855–QUIT VET (1–855–784–8838) to speak with a highly skilled counselor who can offer individualized counseling about quitting smoking and help develop a personalized quit plan. The quitline is available Monday –Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern Time. For extra support when quitting, try using SmokefreeVET, a mobile text messaging service that provides around-the-clock encouragement, advice, and tips to help you quit. You can opt-in to the program by texting the word VET from your phone to 47848 up to two weeks before your quit date. You will receive text messages of support and encouragement for six weeks after your quit date. Veterans without a text messaging plan can just text a keyword, URGE, STRESS, or SMOKED, to 47848 and receive a single message in response. For more information on VA’s smoking cessation services, visit www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking/.



VA Health Care Facilities Named to 2013 “Most Wired” Hospitals List - The Department of Veterans Affairs, representing 152 VA medical centers, was recently named to the 2013 “Most Wired” hospitals list. The list is released by Hospitals & Health Networks, in partnership with McKesson, the College of Healthcare Information Management Executives and the American Hospital Association.

\$300 Million in New Grants to End Homelessness – The grants will help approximately 120,000 homeless and at-risk Veterans and their families. The grants were awarded to 319 community agencies in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Post-9/11 GI Bill Celebrates Fourth Anniversary - August 1 marked the fourth anniversary of the Post-9/11 GI Bill. VA has issued approximately \$30 billion in Post 9/11 GI-Bill benefit payments since its inception in August 2009 and helped nearly 1 million Service members, Veterans, and their families pursue their education.

DoD, VA Consortia to Research PTSD and TBI The Consortium to Alleviate PTSD (CAP), a collaborative effort between the University of Texas Health Science Center – San Antonio, San Antonio Military Medical Center, and the Boston VA will seek the most effective diagnostic, prognostic, novel treatment, and rehabilitative strategies to treat acute PTSD and prevent chronic PTSD. The Chronic Effects of Neurotrauma Consortium (CENC), a collaborative effort between Virginia Commonwealth University, the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, and the Richmond VA will examine the factors which influence the chronic effects of mTBI and common comorbidities in order to improve diagnostic and treatment options.

Minneapolis VA, U of M to Educate More Nurses

A partnership and \$5.3 Million grant to educate more nurses will yield 100 additional bachelor's degree-prepared nurses over five years.



U of Minnesota Nursing Students

This fall, the University of Minnesota School of Nursing will admit its largest class of undergraduate nursing students in history, with 148 sophomores entering its bachelor's degree program – 20 more than in any previous year. This expansion is possible due to a \$5.3 million competitive award from the federal Department of Veterans Affairs to the Minneapolis VA Health Care System (VAHCS) announced in July.

The grant enables the VA and the University of Minnesota to partner on preparing bachelor's degree nurses for the workforce who can provide high quality, coordinated care to America's Veterans.

"We are incredibly excited to be part of this program," said Helen Pearlman, nurse executive at the Minneapolis VAHCS. "About 20 VAs around the country offered proposals; we are one of only six to receive the award. The experience at the VA will be unique and unlike any other hospital in the Twin Cities."

Students who choose to participate in the Veterans Affairs Nurse Academic Partnership will spend much of the last two years of their four-year bachelor's degree nursing program in clinical service and study at the Minneapolis VA. Students will have unique opportunities to participate in interprofessional healthcare teams in the care of Veterans.

Students will be exposed to the wide range of services offered to Veterans and gain an understanding of unique Veteran health care needs. As a one of the largest clinical teaching facilities in Minnesota, the VA offers learning opportunities in multiple trauma, long-term rehabilitation, home health, telemetry, spinal cord injury, psychiatric mental health and chronic pain treatment.

"Each year, we are not able to admit many outstanding, well-qualified applicants to our Bachelor of Science in Nursing program primarily due to the limited capacity for student clinical placements in the community," said Connie White Delaney, Dean of the School of Nursing at the University of Minnesota.

"This partnership with the VA enables us to educate more bachelor's degree nurses effectively while increasing the knowledge and understanding our students and faculty have of the unique health challenges facing Veterans and their families. This outstanding initiative addresses the Institute of Medicine's call for 80% increase in the registered nurse workforce with bachelor's degrees. This is an excellent time to take our partnership with the VA to a new level that capitalizes on the strengths of both organizations."

Funding will be used to support 10 additional faculty who will be fully devoted to the education of these students and engaged both at the University of Minnesota School of Nursing and the Minneapolis VA.



2013 Twin Cities Homeless Veteran Stand Down by the Numbers:

- ✚ 2 days (Aug 6-7)
- ✚ 250 volunteers
- ✚ 889 Veterans attended
- ✚ 226 basic health screens
- ✚ 150 rapid HIV tests
- ✚ 150 dental exams
- ✚ 139 eye exams
- ✚ 19 new enrollees
- ✚ 21 VA staffers





“On the Beat” is published bi-monthly for Veterans, patients, employees, volunteers and friends of the Minneapolis VA Health Care System.

Comments:

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Minneapolis/St. Paul Magazine Recognizes VA Staff as “Top Doctors” in 2013 Survey



Dr. Goldish



Dr. Thompson



Dr. Warshaw



Dr. Foman

Many physician from the Minneapolis VA were recognized in the July 2013 issue of Minneapolis/St. Paul magazine’s annual “Top Doctors” edition. They were: Gary Goldish, MD, and Marilyn Thompson, MD, in category of Physical Medicine/Rehabilitation (Physiatry); and Erin Warshaw, MD, and Neal Foman, MD, in category of Dermatology. Several other physicians based at the University of Minnesota but doing significant clinical work at the VA were also recognized. They include: Charles Billington, MD, endocrinology; and Steven Santilli, MD, vascular surgery.

RECENT VISITORS TO MINNEAPOLIS VA

- **July 16-18** - Booz Allen Hamilton team on site for women’s health program review
- **July 24** – Dr. Bruce Jaeger, Dean of Academics for VA’s EES.
- **July 30** – Professional golfer Fred Funk visits Fisher House
- **Aug. 7** – Congressman John Kline briefed by Executive team, Brain Sciences Center Director Apostolos Georgopoulos, MD, and Psychologist Brian Engdahl, PhD; and Tele-ICU director Robert Bonello, MD.
- **Aug. 7** – Legislators and research staff of the Minnesota State House of Representatives visit Extended Care and Rehab Program; presentation led by Gary Goldish, MD
- **Aug 8** – Five ombudsmen with the State of Minnesota Board of Aging attend briefings with medical center director, tour facility and meet with Riley McCarten, MD, of Geriatric Research, Education, & Clinical Center (GRECC),
- **Aug. 20** – Three aides to U.S. Rep. Tim Walz visit medical center, the Center for Chronic Disease Outcomes Research, and the Community Resource & Referral Center in downtown Minneapolis.
- **Aug. 20** –Aide to U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin visit Chippewa Valley CBOC.